

CITY of TORRANCE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



Letter from the Coordinator

"Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another."
Erma Bombeck

Welcome

to the first edition of the City of Torrance Volunteer Newsletter! We envision this newsletter as a resource for our volunteers to not only learn about the wide variety of volunteer opportunities available throughout the City, but as a place to find out about City departments, programs, services, activities and other events.

The newsletter is also a way for us to recognize our volunteer accomplishments and to profile the many different volunteers that work hard to make the City of Torrance such a great place to live and work.

Since this will be your quarterly newsletter, we want to hear from you about the information you would like to see in this publication. Let us know your story and content ideas, suggestions, or comments by contacting Laura Lohnes, City Volunteer Coordinator at (310) 618-2967, or via email at llohnese@TorranceCA.gov. Also, you can subscribe to an "e-version" of this publication by sending your e-mail contact data to the address shown with a message that says "sign me up for the newsletter."



Volunteer Opportunities



We Need Volunteers For The Following Programs:

Coaches for Youth Flag Football, Recreation Division, Community Services Department- Contact Darrin McClelland in Community Services at (310) 618-2930

Transit Ambassadors, Transit Department - This is a peer-based program in which seniors help each other navigate the Torrance Transit System. The Ambassadors give new riders the "dos and don'ts," safety rules, teach them how to read schedules, and how to best use the City's Transit services. For more information, or to sign up to be a Transit Ambassador, Contact Donna Baranowski at (310) 618-6240.

Words on Wheels, Torrance Public Library- The Words on Wheels Program brings library books and other materials

to homebound patrons. Become a volunteer for the Torrance Public Library's Words on Wheels (WOW) service and bring the enjoyment of reading and listening to those in our community who are unable to visit the library.

The Torrance Public Library will match you with one or more community members and issue you a WOW library card. You will find out what your WOW partner likes and arrange a regular pick-up and delivery time.

To sign up, or for more information, please contact the Words on Wheels Coordinator at (310) 618-5950.

We Need Volunteers For These Special Events:

Coastal Cleanup Day, September 19, 2009, 9 a.m. to Noon - Join "Team Torrance" and help them clean up the

beach at this annual international event. Contact Beach Captains Cyndy Rosell or Jeff Kidd at (310) 781-6900 for more information. Volunteers can simply show up and register the morning of the event at Miramar Park or can sign up and find out more about the Annual Beach Cleanup event and other events on the Heal The Bay website:

<http://www.healthebay.org/volunteer/ccd/default.asp>

Make a Difference Day! This annual event, which is part of the National Make-a-Difference Day initiative created by USA Weekend Magazine, will be held Saturday, October 24, 2009 - 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center.

Additional information will be posted on the City's volunteer website in the Fall. See

<http://www.torrcnet.com/VolunteerProgram.htm> for more information on the City's volunteer program.



Events of Interest

To find out more about these events and for events not listed, check out the City's event calendar at <http://www.torrcnet.com/events/webevent.plx?callID=2020;cmd=listday>

City of Torrance 11th Annual Employee Variety Show - Saturday, September 12, 2009, 7 p.m., James Armstrong Theater, Tickets, \$15, (proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society/Torrance Relay for Life).

City of Torrance Disaster Expo, Saturday, October 10, 2009, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Cultural Arts Center



"If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever."
Kofi Annan

Volunteer Spotlight

Torrance Police Department's Most Active Volunteer: Virginia Greenhouse

While some people see retirement as a time to kick back and relax, others see it as a time to give back. This is certainly true of Virginia Greenhouse who has accumulated a staggering number of hours as a Torrance Police Department (TPD) volunteer working four days a week with an average of six to seven hours each day. Even with well over 10,000 hours of volunteer time logged in, she still shows no signs of slowing down.

Greenhouse volunteers in the TPD's Traffic Division where she has been a fixture since she began volunteering in 2001. Although a majority of her work occurs in the Traffic Division with duties that include data entry and meeting and greeting people at the counter, she's often "on loan" to help in other divisions, including the Records Division, the TPD's North Torrance Community Center, the Community Affairs Division, the Police Chief's Office, and the Property Room. According to Lt. Steve D'Anjou, "She even helps on special projects, really anything we need administrative work on. She has helped on the Safety Fair, and with the Watch Challenge, which is a sporting event, where we challenge the Fire Department to build camaraderie. She helps set up. She also works every year with the Armed Forces Day Parade." With this much contribution to the department, "she's become part of the family, she's so trusted and known; other divisions call for her...and she always volunteers, she has special skills," says Lt. Steve D'Anjou of the Community Affairs Division, "everybody knows and loves her."



While Greenhouse might be an energetic and enthusiastic volunteer, she is very modest and did not want to be interviewed for our newsletter; however, she was able to answer a few questions. When asked about what she likes most about volunteering at TPD, she answers she likes "everything" because she "enjoys the Torrance Police Department and I enjoy meeting people most of the time."

Lt. D'Anjou, who works closely with Greenhouse, was more than happy to talk about one of the department's most valued volunteers, saying "She's wonderful; she's the epitome of everything you'd want in a volunteer; dedicated, outgoing, friendly, always energetic and eager to help in any area of the department. The whole rank structure all think of her very highly and trust her implicitly."

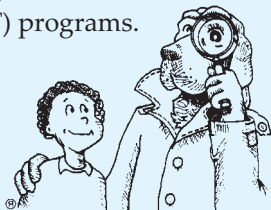
Torrance Police Department Volunteer Program

If you'd like to give Virginia Greenhouse a run for her money, then volunteer with the Torrance Police Department!

Lieutenant Steve D'Anjou of the Community Affairs Division has been charged with revamping the department's volunteer program. "We've run a volunteer program since August 1992, but it's been stagnant for a number of years," he said.

Until now, most Torrance Police Department volunteer opportunities have mainly consisted of office work and special events although they have had other very active volunteers through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), The Torrance Amateur Radio Association (TARA), and the Animal Disaster Team (ADT) programs.

The volunteer program was moved to Community Affairs last January because the Torrance Police Department is seeking the assistance of volunteers to reach its community outreach goals. "Now we want to take advantage of the highly qualified applicant pool we have found through our community outreach during the last year and are looking for effective ways to integrate volunteers in the day-to-day activities of the Torrance Police Department," D'Anjou said.





Volunteer Spotlight

*"The breeze, the trees, the honey bees -
All volunteers!"
~Juliet Carinreap*

Torrance Farmers' Market Volunteer: Jerry Herbers

When Jerry Herbers retired from United Airlines after forty-two years, he didn't immediately start volunteering at the Torrance Certified Farmers' Market - he waited one week and then started volunteering!

Having retired in 2002, he is now in his seventh year of retirement and is still very happy with his decision to volunteer there. So why did he start in the first place?

"I would come to the market and shop and Mary Lou kept asking me when I was going to start volunteering. I enjoyed coming to the market and enjoyed the vendors that I had come in contact with so I figured I would give it a try."

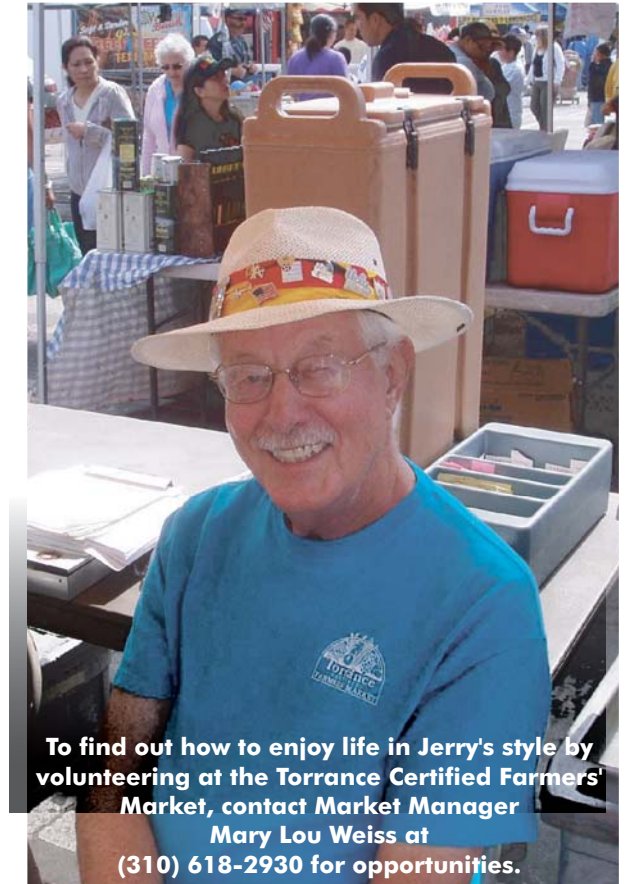
"Mary Lou" is Mary Lou Weiss, the Market Manager of the Torrance Certified Farmers' Market who says, volunteers can do a wide variety of tasks at the Farmers' Market ranging from working in the information booth to collecting fees. Jerry, however, has found his niche; "I relieve vendors when there is only one in the booth or they are by themselves and need to have a break. This means I sell the product, I do this for four of them on Saturday and as needed on Tuesday. I also hand out load sheets and communications from the Market Manager."

His most important job is the one he does first thing when he arrives. "I check for posted certificates first thing each market morning." The certificates are required for farmers to sell at a certified farmers' market; they can only sell what they grow and the posted certificate identifies those items and the amounts grown.

Jerry advises other people who might be interested in volunteering at the farmer's market to just go out and try it. He says, "They'd be surprised at how much they'll enjoy it, you get to see a lot of friends from the community and do something helpful."

Not only does Jerry enjoy his volunteer work, but those he works with enjoy having him there too. "Jerry is a good volunteer because he's so flexible. He's a very easy-going individual who I can say 'farmer so and so needs your help' and he's off to do it. He took his assignment that I gave him very readily," said Weiss. "If you look at Jerry, he is very well rounded, because he has been a professional in the airlines, he conducts himself as a professional. And, he also has a well-rounded and pleasant personality. He's a good meeter and a greeter."

As he says, the main reason he volunteers at the Torrance Farmers' Market, is because "It's fun, that's why, and it's not work, it's fun."



Coordinating the Neighborhood Watch Program is one major opportunity TPD is targeting for volunteer involvement. Because its size-over 1,100 members-the program needs volunteers to help with meetings and to serve as liaisons with block captains. Other police department volunteer opportunities include working in fleet services helping to maintain police vehicles and they would also like someone with a public relations or marketing background to develop better ways to reach out to the community.

D'Anjou is also working on a new project that he says is only in need of the right volunteer. "We are hoping to do home security inspections."

D'Anjou also emphasized that the Torrance Police Department wants to make sure when they have qualified applicants that they create or place them in an area they are interested in so it not only helps the department, but the volunteer enjoys the experience too.

He is also open to listening to any and all ideas and says, "If anybody has a skill or has a desire to volunteer at the Torrance Police Department, we are open to just about anything, just let us know." For more information or to volunteer at the Torrance Police Department, contact Lt. Steve D'Anjou at (310) 618-5728, or via email at CommunityAffairs@TorranceCA.gov. Anyone that is interested can also apply online via the Police Department web site at www.tpd.TorranceCA.gov or www.torrancepd.org. The application is listed under 'Online Services'.



Volunteer's Q & A

This section is intended to provide answers to questions asked by our volunteers. Please send your questions to Laura Lohnes at llohnese@TorranceCA.gov and we'll do our best to get answers. For this inaugural issue, staff has provided some answers to frequently asked questions regarding fingerprinting of volunteers.



Why do I have to get Fingerprinted?

In October, 2002, the City Council passed a Resolution requiring all volunteers and contract employees to be fingerprinted. The goal was to provide the greatest protection to everyone who uses city services. In addition, several state laws require fingerprinting for any volunteer or employee having supervisory or disciplinary control over a minor, elderly, or mentally disabled individual.

Where do I get fingerprinted?

Volunteers can get their fingerprints taken at North Torrance Police Substation at McMaster Park, 3624 Artesia Boulevard. This is the only police facility in Torrance that provides public fingerprinting services. Fingerprint applications can be obtained at 3231 Torrance Boulevard, and appointments are mandatory for fingerprinting.

Is fingerprinting messy or uncomfortable?

The old method of inked fingerprinting is now a thing of the past. The Live Scan system digitally captures your fingerprints, and through a high speed computer line, sends the fingerprints electronically to the State Department of Justice (DOJ). However, it takes some time to get a good image on Live Scan, so be prepared to spend 20 to 30 minutes at your fingerprint appointment.

I am old and I no longer have fingerprints, do I still need to have fingerprints taken?

Unfortunately, the lack of fingerprint ridges can be quite a problem among senior citizens and can cause a failure notice to be generated by the DOJ. The DOJ also requires two failures before they will do a name and social security search. To volunteer for the City, our current policy dictates that the background of all volunteers must be verified by a fingerprint submission to the DOJ. We do sympathize with the hardship that can result from poor ridges.

If I have any sort of conviction, then I cannot be considered for volunteer work?

The City will analyze each conviction and determine if it is related to the nature of the volunteer work you are seeking. The City will also consider how much time has elapsed since the time of conviction. There are certain types of convictions that will immediately disqualify a candidate from volunteer work. If you have questions about your conviction history, please call (310) 618-2967 and staff will assist you.



About Your City Government

On Thursday, May 21, 2009, Mayor Frank Scotto presented his 2009 State of the City Address. In his speech, he outlined that despite the economic conditions and budget cutbacks from the state the City is still financially stable.

As he stated in his speech, "As we consider the uncertain future, we will continue to take a conservative approach with our finances. We've always been prudent with our spending, and are consistently looking for ways to be efficient as we address the needs of the community. Torrance maintains a balanced budget for the year 2008-2009."

Other highlights of the speech included the Mayor's following announcements:

- We have projects that will now be funded by the receipt of federal stimulus funds for the rehabilitation of Crenshaw Boulevard, which is in design phase; and up to ten new buses for our aging transit fleet. This is going to help modernize our aging bus fleet. The new buses will not only benefit riders, but also the environment, as they will be the new generation of hybrids.
- The introduction of "Focus Based Policing" in the Torrance Police Department to enhance the relationship with the community and improve the way front-line police services are delivered. As a result, in January 2010, Team Policing will be implemented that will create new geographic boundaries for patrol officers bringing more of them to our streets when they are most needed.
- The need for a fifth paramedic unit in our Fire Department arose, and we were able to accomplish this through the redistribution of existing personnel.
- The ranking of Torrance as the 4th safest city in Los Angeles County and the 23rd safest city in the United States with populations of over 100,000.
- The completion of the citywide traffic study and the approval of funding to create a Traffic Management Center, a project with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, to allow City staff to constantly monitor traffic conditions.
- The rehabilitation of two main thoroughfares: Torrance Boulevard and 190th Street.
- The remodel of the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library to ensure earthquake safety including the renovated Library Meeting Room. This project is being followed by improvements of all the other branch libraries.
- The formation of an Ethics and Integrity Committee to create an ethics plan and guidelines for the City Council, City management, and all City employees.

In his Address, Mayor Frank Scotto assured the community that "...as Mayor of the City of Torrance, the City will do its part to be stewards of the resources we have. We will continue to be prudent managers over these resources so we can address the needs of our growing community." He ended his remarks with challenge to everyone to find "creative ways to help one another! Now more than ever, I say we cannot do it alone."

To view Mayor Scotto's 2009 State of the City Address, you may watch it on CitiCABLE Channel 3 or visit www.TorranceCA.Gov.

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